



Frère John Martin

Homily on Luke 6:39-40

³⁹ He also told them this parable: "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit? ⁴⁰ The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Today's Gospel presents us with a profound teaching from Jesus—a lesson about spiritual blindness and the transformation that comes through true vision. Jesus, the Master Teacher, uses a simple yet striking image: a blind person leading another blind person. It is a warning, but also an invitation—to seek true sight and to become those who see and help others to see.

Understanding Jesus' Teaching Through the New Covenant

To grasp the depth of Christ's words, we must view them through the lens of the New Covenant that God promised through the prophet Jeremiah:

"The days are coming," declares the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest... For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."
(Jeremiah 31:31-34)

Jesus came to inaugurate this New Covenant, calling people to move beyond external laws and into a deeper, internal transformation—a law written on the heart. This is the essence of repentance: not merely turning away from sin but awakening to a new way of seeing and living.

Who Are the Blind?

Jesus' question—"Can the blind lead the blind?"—challenges us to consider the nature of spiritual blindness. Blindness is not only physical but can also be intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. A physically blind person depends on external guides; similarly, a spiritually blind person depends on external sources—whether scripture, religion, or human authority—for direction.

Children, for example, are spiritually blind in the sense that they do not yet discern right from wrong on their own. They need guidance. But spiritual blindness is not permanent like physical blindness; it is like cataracts that can be removed. It is ignorance that can be lifted.

A spiritually blind person says, "Scripture is the way, the truth, and the life," or "Religion is the way, the truth, and the life." They rely on external authority. This was the mindset under the Old Covenant, where people followed the Law as their guiding light.

But a person who can see, who has moved beyond external dependence, declares, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." This is the experience of the New Covenant. A person with spiritual sight helps others to see, to become independent, to walk in their own light.

Jesus: The One Who Heals Blindness

Throughout his ministry, Jesus healed the physically blind—people who knew they were blind and cried out to him for sight. But more importantly, he healed spiritual blindness.

What does it mean to heal spiritual blindness? It means to awaken people from external dependence. A blind guide leads others into dependency, saying, "Follow me; follow this law; follow this doctrine." But one who can see liberates others to find their own sight.

If someone says, "Religion is my way, my truth, and my life," they are still blind, still dependent. They pass on their blindness by teaching others to rely on external sources. But if someone says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life," they have been healed. They no longer depend on external guides; they see for themselves. And they lead others to see.



From External Authority to Inner Transformation

This truth is echoed in the Mundaka Upanishad, where a disciple asks a guru: "Master, what is that by knowing which I know everything?" The guru distinguishes between *apara vidhya* (inferior wisdom—scriptures, philosophy, theology) and *para vidhya* (superior wisdom—direct experience of the Divine). One must start with *apara vidhya*, but true wisdom is *para vidhya*, the direct knowledge of God. A true teacher does not keep disciples dependent on scriptures or doctrines but leads them to experience God for themselves. A guru is one who has gone beyond scripture, who has direct experience, and who helps others attain the same.

Jesus: The Teacher Who Sees

This brings us to a vital question: Who is our teacher? A blind teacher, who is still dependent, or a teacher who sees and makes others independent?

Jesus was a teacher who saw. He knew scripture but was not bound by it. He declared: "It is written in your Law... but I say to you." He spoke with an authority that came from within, not from external sources.

His mission was not to create followers who remained blind but to awaken sight in others. He said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." He did not seek to make people dependent on him but to set them free, to see for themselves. That is why he told his disciples:

"I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends." (John 15:15)

A true teacher leads disciples to equality. Those who are fully trained become like their teacher. They move from being blind followers to seeing masters.

Which Christ Do We Present?

This leaves us with a crucial question:

What kind of Jesus does Christianity present to the world? A Christ who keeps people blind and dependent, insisting that everyone say, "Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life"—or a Christ who heals blindness, who makes people independent, and who enables them to say, "I am the way, the truth, and the life"?

May we follow the Christ who truly sees, and may we, in turn, be those who see and help others to see. Amen

Brother John Martin on march 5th, 2025

